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Egypt E-Alert

STARS AND STRIPES

Bright Star highlights benefits of joint exercises

By Anthony C. Zinni

Retired Four Star Marine Corps General and former commander of U.S. Central Command, Anthony C. Zinni, commented on the history and benefits of the biennial Bright Star military exercises, currently taking place in Egypt, in today's *Stars and Stripes*. For nearly thirty years the United States has taken part in the exercises, training in Egypt along side Egyptian and coalition troops, to improve interoperability and foster better cooperation among allied nations.

Zinni writes: "To keep our borders safe, sometimes it is necessary to project power outside them. Afghanistan is the obvious example of this — the mission to ensure that Afghanistan does not once again become a breeding ground from which terrorists can attack America and the rest of the world is a complicated-but-necessary one.

But what is less noticed by the media is the other way in which America's armed forces interact in the Middle East and the Arab world — namely through training missions with key allies. If asked in what region does the U.S. military for 30 years hold its largest foreign training exercise, few people would guess the Middle East. Yet right now, we are seeing such an exercise with American forces taking place in the desert sands of Egypt.

Bright Star, as this exercise is called, takes place every two years and is a direct outcome of the 1979 Camp David Accords. For nearly three decades the U.S. and Egyptian militaries have worked together — a relationship that is highlighted and strengthened when our forces go to Egypt for Bright Star. These two weeks of training are now an invaluable part of U.S. Central Command's engagement strategy, dramatically improving our readiness and interoperability."

To read the full text of the op-ed, [click here](#).

To see other coverage of the Bright Star exercises, [click here](#).

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